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**DAYTON'S AMERICORPS MEMBERS WORK WITH TROUBLED YOUTH,
PROVIDE ACADEMIC TUTORING, CLEAN UP NEIGHBORHOODS**

DAYTON, Ohio — From gardens to classrooms, this year's crop of SWEAT members are reaching out to local children in many Dayton neighborhoods.

Dayton's AmeriCorps program, called Serve With Energy And Talent (SWEAT) and administered by the University of Dayton, is recruiting 23 members for next year's program.

In the past five years, about 75 SWEAT members have given a year of service to the Dayton community.

- Lennie Presock, a 1997 UD graduate, is now in his second year as an academic coach at Holy Family School in east Dayton. Presock, who has a bachelor's degree in English, tutors first- through fourth-graders in reading, conducts an afterschool homework program and created the school's computer lab.

"I've been able to see really definable progress," Presock says, citing one second-grader who was having trouble reading a clock. "She came in every day after school for a week and asked me to draw the hands in blank clocks. After about a week she had it. She stopped coming for a while. Now she's in third grade and she's having trouble with her multiplication tables, but she's so enthusiastic and she asks me to test her again and again."

- Unlike Presock, Ericka Goulet had always planned on being a teacher. She's a 1998 UD education graduate and is pursuing her master's in education as well as serving with SWEAT.

"I work with a lot of kids who don't get a lot of support from home," she says. In addition to tutoring in reading at Corpus Christi Elementary School, Goulet coordinates the homework club and has started a school newspaper. "I'm not from the city, so working in an urban environment has been a good experience for me." Goulet is now applying for teaching positions in Dayton Public Schools.

- Nikki Xarhoulacos said she wanted to perform a year of service before entering law school. DayBreak, a runaway shelter where she has worked this year as a SWEAT member, has hired her to serve as a mentor next year — so law school has been postponed.

Xarhoulacos, another 1998 UD grad, provides education to the youth, usually ranging in age from 10 to 17, who come to the shelter. "I don't know what kids are going to be here or what we're going to be doing until I get here," she says. "I work with kids who have either been suspended or dropped out or are too far away from school."

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With such varying skill levels, Xarhoulacos strives to find activities that they can all participate in. One of the popular projects is a city simulation. "We create businesses, a population and maps," she says.

- Luci Beachdell, a 1995 Antioch College graduate, does her teaching in a garden. She works with the Five Rivers Metroparks' "Grow With Your Neighbors" program and the Ohio State University Extension 4-H program to help kids grow flowers, fruits and vegetables.

"Lettuce has been a popular cold-weather crop. They like making salads," she says. "Broccoli is always a hit. The kids always like to eat it right out of the garden. And cucumbers are fun too because we can make pickles," she says.

Beachdell said the children's achievements are "nothing huge or enormous" but her gratification comes when "one kid wants to stay late to do extra work or when a child points out to another child what a strawberry plant looks like," she says. "In really small ways I know what I'm doing makes a difference."

Other SWEAT members also work as neighborhood community development coordinators, truancy counselors and advisors to teenage parents.

In addition to a monthly \$724 stipend (next year \$760), SWEAT members receive health insurance and a deferment on their student loans. When they complete 1,700 hours of service in an 11-and-half-month period, they receive \$4,725 for college bills.

Applications will be accepted until May 20 for next year's program, which runs from Sept. 13, 1999, to Aug. 31, 2000. For more information, call (937) 229-2053.

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For media interviews, call **Julie Sommer**, SWEAT program coordinator, at (937) 229-2052. Call **Lenny Presock** at (937) 298-2610. Call **Ericka Goulet** at (937) 299-8020 or (937) 228-3091. Call **Nikki Xarhoulacos** at (937) 461-1000 or **Luci Beachdell** at (937) 277-3488.